



Appendix C: Funding Options Matrix

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission prepared this appendix as part of the “*Plymouth Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines Project Recommendations*” report.

December 2022

Overview of Potential Funding Options

The City of Plymouth contracted the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) to identify funding options that could be implemented or pursued to fund/finance improvements, projects, and programs in the downtown planning area. This appendix identifies and describes a range of local funding options and grant opportunities. In addition to these options (identified in a matrix below), an inventory of a wide-ranging list of grant programs and application deadlines are documented on the BLRPC’s funding opportunities portal (linked below). This portal is regularly updated by the BLRPC team.

<https://funding-opportunities-baylakerpc.hub.arcgis.com/>.

Tool	Description	Potential Revenue	Eligible Use of Funds
Local Options			
General Fund Allocation	The City of Plymouth may allocate unrestricted General Fund dollars to cover a range of project and program expenditures. Jurisdictions’ general funds comprise revenues from multiple sources, primarily property tax revenue. The prioritization of General Fund revenues to support downtown design projects and programs would likely be determined annually as part of the budget approval process.	Funding would be contingent on the Common Council’s funding priorities.	Flexible use of funds.
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	CDBG is a program funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program is intended to support community development activities identified through an ongoing local process.	Funding would be contingent on priorities set forth in Plymouth’s consolidated plan.	Activities addressing infrastructure, economic development, public facilities, community centers, housing rehab, public services, clearance/acquisition, microenterprise assistance, code enforcement, homeowner assistance, etc.

Tool	Description	Potential Revenue	Eligible Use of Funds
Business Improvement District (BID)	<p>A BID is a special assessment district, authorized under state law. It is a defined commercial and/or industrial area, governed by a board of directors. When a BID is formed, property owners inside the BID are assessed an additional property tax to pay for projects that aim to improve and market the BID area. The improvements and additional marketing will directly benefit the property owners in the BID.</p> <p>When a BID is formed, they may use other funding sources to supplement levy revenue including investment interest, contributions from private donors or the municipality, grants, member fees, and event/program revenues.</p>	<p>Financial capacity is contingent on the size of the BID and established levy rates. Based on the downtown planning area's existing total assessed value (AV) of \$20.4 million (2021),¹ a levy rate of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$0.50 per \$1,000 of AV could generate about \$10,200 / yr. • \$3.00 per \$1,000 AV could generate about \$61,300 / yr. • \$5.00 per \$1,000 AV could generate about \$102,200 / yr. 	Flexible use of funds, but expenditure activities must be listed in the proposed operating plan for the district.
Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)	A NID is a special assessment district, authorized under state law, where at least one property owner of a proposed area petitions to be assessed an additional tax to pay for capital improvements (which will directly benefit the property owners in the NID).	Financial capacity is contingent on the size of the NID and established levy rates. See BID estimates above for funding capacity examples for the downtown planning area.	Flexible use of funds, but expenditure activities must be listed in the proposed operating plan for the district.
Room Tax	<p>In Wisconsin, municipalities may levy room taxes which are fees charged to customers of overnight lodging. The fee is a percentage of lodging charges incurred by the customer. A certain share of revenues must be used to support tourism; the balance is discretionary.</p> <p>Plymouth's room tax rate is eight percent.</p>	Financial capacity is ultimately dependent on the tax rate and the amount of overnight lodging in the jurisdiction. A portion of total tax revenue may be allocated to qualifying projects each year.	Municipalities must allocate 70% of its room tax revenue to tourism promotion and tourism development purposes.
General Obligation Bonds	General obligation-local improvement bonds are a temporary increase in property tax rates to finance public improvements (typically over 20 to 30 years).	Financial capacity can be quite significant.	Public, capital improvements.
Local Business License Fees	A business license fee is a permit issued by government agencies to businesses for the privilege of conducting business in a jurisdiction or district. The fee could be flat, based on business classification, or based on the number of employees. The licenses could also be imposed city-wide or on downtown businesses only.	<p>Financial capacity will vary based on the fee rate, fee basis, and number of businesses paying the fee.</p> <p>A city-wide flat fee of \$20 (based on an estimated 276 – 386 businesses in Plymouth²) would amount to \$5,520 to \$7,720 per year.</p>	Flexible use of funds.

¹Total assessed value for the downtown planning area derives from the Sheboygan County Assessor. Financial capacity is rounded to the nearest hundred.

² The fee basis of 276 to 386 businesses per year relies on the number of business firms in the City of Plymouth per the U.S. Census' 2017 Economic Survey (low range) and the number of business firms in the City and Town of Plymouth per 2019 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data (high range).

Tool	Description	Potential Revenue	Eligible Use of Funds
Vehicle Registration Fee (Wheel Tax)	<p>A vehicle registration fee is typically a flat rate charge that the owner of a vehicle must pay when they register their vehicle in a jurisdiction that imposes the fee.</p> <p>The State of Wisconsin currently imposes an annual \$85 fee on traditional automobiles, for example. Sheboygan County and the City of Plymouth do not currently impose a local vehicle registration fee.</p> <p>In Wisconsin, local vehicle registration fees (imposed by cities, villages, and counties) typically vary between \$10 and \$40.</p>	Individuals had 3,085 registered automobiles in Plymouth. If Plymouth imposed a \$10 to \$20 registration fee, estimated financial capacity could vary between \$30,300 and \$61,200 per year. ³	All revenue from the fee must be used for transportation related purposes.
Parking Fees	A parking fee is a charge for the privilege of parking in a particular area (e.g., on-street, downtown district, or in a specific parking lot or structure). Cities can charge parking fees through coin-operated meters or smart parking meters.	Financial capacity will vary based on the fee rate and parking demand.	Flexible use of funds.
Grant Programs			
Neighborhood Investment Fund	Funded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, this program is intended to help Wisconsin recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The program is intended to emphasize increasing services for underserved individuals and populations.	Total money distributed through this program is \$200 million. Awards are likely to vary (as of September 2021 information was still rolling out).	Potential projects include affordable housing initiatives, transit and childcare solutions, and innovative public services (including new and improved facilities).
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants Program	This program was established to preserve valuable wildlife habitat and natural areas, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation. The program comprises several grant subprograms for different activities and for different group eligibilities (e.g., local governments, non-profits, “friends” groups, etc.).	Grants awards are subject to the availability of funds.	Land acquisition and recreational development.
AARP Community Challenge Program	An annual grant which provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. Funding derives from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).	Several hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars.	Projects that: create or improve parks and public spaces, deliver transportation options, support housing options, increase engagement, demonstrate the value of “Smart Cities,” and focus on diversity and inclusion while improving the built and social environment.

³ Total registered vehicle count is based on data from the Wisconsin DOT (as of July 9, 2021). Estimated financial capacity deducts the State administrative fee of \$0.17 per registered vehicle and is rounded to the nearest hundred.

Tool	Description	Potential Revenue	Eligible Use of Funds
Philanthropy			
Crowdfunding	Crowdfunding is the practice of funding projects or programs by raising many small amounts of money from many people, typically via online channels.	Funding is variable.	Variable use of funds.
Capital Fundraising Campaigns	A coordinated effort to raise a substantial amount of revenue of for a specific project or effort in a pre-established period (up to many years). A successful capital campaign requires increasing public awareness for projects and programs via phone calls, emails, mailers, or events. They may require volunteer support or an increased use of staff resources.	Funding is variable.	Variable use of funds.
Advertising or Naming Rights	<p>An advertising-based financial transaction that relies on a person/organization purchasing the right to name a facility or event. This option could also take the form of a business sponsorship or legacy gift program.</p> <p>In Plymouth, naming rights of entire facilities are generally designated to honor historic figures. That said, an advertising/naming rights program can take different forms. For example, it could involve the implementation of a plaque to highlight and thank multiple, smaller donors.</p>	Funding is variable; however, without larger organizations with great spending power, revenue is typically small, and funds may not contribute meaningfully to projects.	Examples include capital improvements used by community members, projects in public spaces, community programs, projects/programs which resonate with local corporations or larger donors.